

Patient Abandonment Policy Statement

The concerns expressed regarding patient abandonment and mandatory overtime is equally shared by members of the Georgia Board of Nursing. Board staff and Board members alike, are increasingly being confronted by consumers and employers regarding these issues. With today's health care environment and current nursing shortage, I fear these scenarios will continue to surface.

During the Board's July meeting, a brief discussion occurred for the need to further dialogue and explore these issues from a regulatory standpoint. Board members reviewed various positions taken by other jurisdictions and a position statement has recently been adopted. During the September 19-21, 2001 Board Meeting, the Georgia Board of Nursing approved the adoption of NCSBN's resolution that states the following:

"That the National Council of State Boards of Nursing [NCSBN] promotes safe and effective nursing practice in the interest of protecting public health and welfare. Therefore, National Council recognizes the professional responsibility of nurses to accept or decline overtime assignments based on their self-assessment of ability to provide safe care."

In addition, the Board also approved the following definition for Patient Abandonment to be utilized by the Board staff as the Board's official position:

"Leaving an assigned patient(s) assignment, for which you have accepted responsibility, prior to the end of an agreed upon work period without appropriately notifying supervisory personnel."

Patient safety is of utmost importance and a conceptual framework for these workplace issues will springboard further dialogue and potential rules and regulations governing nursing practice in Georgia.